

Message Text

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44

ACTION SY-05

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SYE-00 ARA-06 /012 W
----- 122734

P 261515Z APR 76

FM AMEMBASSY PANAMA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7512

C O N F I D E N T I A L PANAMA 2863

FOR SY/FO FROM RSO

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS ASEC

SUBJECT: MARINE SECURITY GUARD

REF: STATE 95436

1. ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS RAISED IN YOUR TELEGRAM:

A. AT PRESENT THE CONOMIC/COMMERCIAL SECTION OF THIS EMBASSY HAS CLASSIFIED HOLDINGS IN THE AMOUNT OF APPROXIMATELY 12 CUBIC FEET. THIS MATERIAL IS STORED IN 6 MODEL SFC-4, GSA APPROVED, MOSLER 4-DRAWER, SECURITY CONTAINERS. IN ADDITION, AT THE SAME TIME THE ECONOMIC/COMMERCIAL SECTION MOVES INTO THE NEW QUARTERS IN THE EMBASSY, A PORTION OF THAT SPACE WILL ALSO BE OCCUPIED BY THE PRESENT AID-PANAMA DIRECTOR, WHO WILL ASSUME THE ADDITIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES OF ECONOMIC COUNSELOR OF EMBASSY. THE PRESENT CHIEF OF THE ECONOMIC SECTION, ALSO OCCUPYING THE NEW SPACE WILL BECOME THE COMMERCIAL COUNSELOR. THIS WILL INCREASE THE CLASSIFIED HOLDINGS BY APPROXIMATELY 3 CUBIC FEET. IT ALSO, WE BELIEVE, WILL NECESSITATE A NEED FOR GREATER PERSONAL PROTECTION FOR TWO HIGH OFFICIALS OF THIS MISSION. THE CLASSIFIED HOLDINGS OF THE CONSULATE, AT PRESENT, CONSIST OF APPROXIMATELY 10 CUBIC FEET, WITH AN ADDITIONAL 2 2/3 CUBIC FEET OF ADMINISTRATIVELY CONTROLLED HOLDINGS. ALL OF THESE CONSULATE HOLDINGS ARE CONTAINED IN A SIMILAR MODEL SFC-4, GSA-APPROVED MOSLER SECURITY CONTAINER AND STORED IN A SECURITY APPROVED VAULT AREA, PROTECTED BY A CLASS 4 VAULT DOOR. THIS VAULT DOOR, CONFIDENTIAL

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HOWEVER, IS LEFT OPEN DURING THE NORMAL WORK DAY TO PERMIT

EAST OFFICIAL ACCESS, BECAUSE OF THE FREQUENCY IN WHICH CONSULAR OFFICIALS MUST REFER TO THE HOLDINGS. THE VULNERABILITY OF THE CITIZENSHIP, VISA AND INFORMATION AREAS, AS WELL AS THE OPEN OFFICE SPACES HOUSING THE CHIEF OF SECTION, TWO CONSULS AND ONE VICE CONSUL IS HIGH.

B. THE MSG PRESENTLY ON DUTY AT THE CONSULATE DURING THE NORMAL WORK DAY (8:00 TO 2:30) AND THE LOCAL CONTRACT GUARD WHO ASSUMES THE POST FROM 2:30 TO 5:00 (AFTER NORMAL WORK DAY) TO A LESSER EXTENT, INSPECTS ALL HAND BAGS, BRIEFCASES, PACKAGES, ETC. OF PERSONS ENTERING THE CONSULATE. HE ALSO OBSERVES THE GENERAL APPEARANCE AND DEMEANOR OF PERSONS ENTERING AND AWAITING SERVICE AT THE CONSULATE. IN A GENERAL WAY, TO ASSURE THAT NO UNFORESEEN INCIDENTS OCCUR. THE POST FEELS THAT MSGS, THROUGH ENVIRONMENTAL TRAINING, EDUCATIONAL PROCESSES AND EXPERIENCE ARE MORE ADEPT IN THIS AND EXERCISE GREATER DISCRETION AND BETTER JUDGMENT IN POSITIONS OF THIS KIND THAN DO LOCAL CONTRACT GUARDS. SHOULD THE PRESENT INCREASE IN TO BY TWO MSGS BE APPROVED THE MSG POST AT THE CONSULATE WOULD BE EXTENDED FROM 8:00 TO 5:00 AND A SIMILAR POST, WITH THE EXACT PROCEDURES AND INSTRUCTIONS WOULD BE ESTABLISHED AT THE ENTRANCE OF THE COMMERCIAL LIBRARY WHEN IT OPENS. (YOUR ATTENTION IS INVITED TO THE FACT THAT THE ENTIRE ECONOMIC/ COMMERCIAL SECTION WILL BE LOCATED UNDERNEATH THE OFFICE OF THE AMBASSADOR, DCM AND C&R AND SHOULD AN EXPLOSIVE DEVICE BE UTILIZED, BESIDES PERSONAL INJURIES AN EXPLOSION COULD KNOCK OUT THE MISSION COMMUNICATIONS SYSTEM.)

C. EXPERIENCE AT THIS POST HAS SHOWN THAT SELDOM IS IT NECESSARY FOR THE MSG AT THE CONSULATE TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE LOCAL VISITORS BECAUSE DECORATIVE SIGNS IN SPANISH AND ENGLISH ARE AFFIXED TO THE FRONT OF HIS DESK ADVISING OF THE NEED FOR INSPECTION OF ALL HANDBAGS, BRIEFCASES, PACKAGES, ETC. THESE LOCAL VISITORS ARE AWARE OF THEIR REASONS FOR BEING THERE AND THEREFORE THERE IS SELDOM NEED FOR DISCUSSION BETWEEN THEM AND THE MSG. THIS LACK OF COMMUNICATION, THE OPINION OF THE POST, PERMITS THE MSG TO DEVOTE MORE TIME TO HIS REASON FOR BEING THERE THAN IT WOULD FOR A LOCAL CONTRACT GUARD WHO MAY BE INCLINED TO TALK
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RATHER THAN PERFORM HIS DUTIES.

D. ALTHOUGH TO DATE THERE HAVE NOT BEEN ANY HOSTAGE SITUATIONS AT THIS POST, WITH THE PANAMA CANAL TREATY NEGOTIATIONS AT A POSSIBLE CRITICAL STAGE, THIS IS AN EVER REAL AND CURRENT POSSIBILITY. THIS CONSIDERATION, IN LIGHT OF OFFICE LETTER NUMBER D-75/9, DATED MAY 9, 1975; THE TERRORIST ATTACK AT KUALA LUMPUR; PLO AND

RED ARMY ACTIVITY; ETC, WAS TAKEN INTO ACCOUNT, ALONG
WITH THE MATTER OF PROTECTION OF CLASSIFIED MATERIAL,
WHEN THE REQUEST FOR INCREASE IN MSG TO WAS MADE.

2. THE REQUEST FOR INCREASE IN MSG TO BY TWO, RESULTING
IN USE OF MARINE SECURITY GUARDS AT BOTH THE CONSULATE
AND THE COMMERCIAL LIBRARY ENTRANCE TO THE EMBASSY HAS
THE APPROVAL OF BOTH THE AMBASSADOR AND DCM.

JORDEN

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